

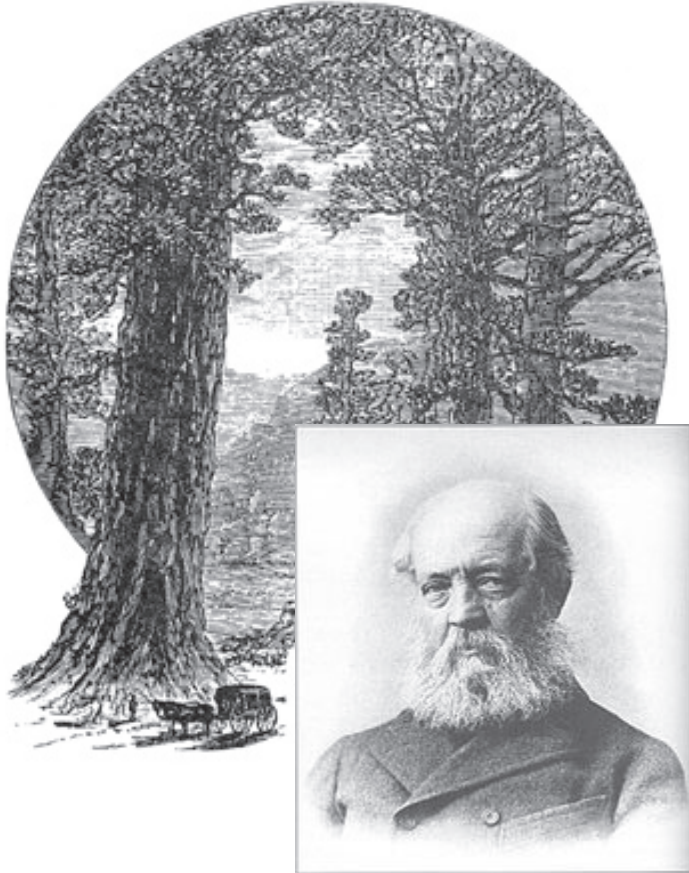
Heritage NEWS



March 2012

Program
Teresa Gillotti
Ypsilanti City Planner
"Urban Forestry plan
and Ypsilanti tree nursery –
a community-wide effort"
[See details on page 3]

7:30 p.m. Wednesday, 21 March 2012
Ladies' Literary Club
218 N. Washington St. Ypsilanti
The public is invited



Frederick Law Olmsted

From the Olmsted Report:

"...If all the street trees of Ypsilanti were to be wiped out of existence it would unquestionably be a very great loss to the community, a loss that would be reflected in a substantial shrinkage of land values. Lots sell better on a street that is made attractive by trees at their best, as compared with similar lots on a bare street or one with a few small sickly specimens.

"...Street trees have already been driven from Congress Street (Michigan Avenue) and Huron Street near the junctions and from Cross Street and River Street near the railway station. These streets represent the beginning of a treeless business district, such as is all too common in our cities but entirely unnecessary in the case of Ypsilanti."

Fabled Firm Studied Ypsilanti's Landscape

-James Mann [previously published in The Depot Town Rag, October 2008]

The Olmsted Brothers landscape architecture firm sent representatives to Ypsilanti in 1913 to prepare a report for proposed improvements that would form the basis for a general city plan. The founder of the firm, Frederick Law Olmsted, who had planned Central Park in New York, did not personally come to Ypsilanti, but his presence would have been noted if he had—he had died a few years before.

The report, dated December 31, 1913, concerned possible improvements in the roads, trees, parks and playgrounds of the city, as well as suggestions for dealing with what the compilers saw as the problems of the city. The report suggested the city acquire the land on the banks of the Huron River for use as a park system. It noted the benefits to the public the use of Frog Island and what is now Riverside Park would have.

A system of parks, the report suggested, should run along the river from the northern limit of the city to the southern limit. This would allow the public to enjoy the natural beauty of the Huron River that was in little need of improvement. "The river with its many advantages as a naturally beautiful feature of the city is now almost wholly ignored, or worse, it is defiled and treated as a menace to adjacent property."

The report referred to the Water Tower as an imposing shaft of stone, but "surmounted by an ill-proportioned wooden dome." The report further noted that the Water Tower was a subject "worthy of careful study by an architect of the best artistic judgment."

The report was submitted, studied, and tossed onto a shelf where it was in time forgotten. A few of the suggestions came to be, but not because of the Olmsted Brother's report.

Other Projects of Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects, Brookline, MA

The grounds of the United States Capitol, Washington, D.C. • Grounds for William Vanderbilt's Biltmore Estate
Scott Fountain on Detroit's Belle Isle • New York City's Central Park

Arboreal records need human scale for true comprehension

Trees, all by themselves, are just relative to other trees. In photographs or drawings, the size of a tree is better communicated when a recognizable reference is included.

Victorian drawings of prize-winning trees of the time were made more graphic by the addition of people, cows, and horses to give a sense of scale to the magnificent specimens towering alongside.



BIG TREES in Our History

-American Forests: Protecting & Restoring Forests for Life

The call to search for America's biggest trees first came in the September 1940 issue of **American Forests** magazine, where concerned forester Joseph Sterns published his article "Let's Find and Save the Biggest Trees." Sterns wasn't referring to the famous and historic trees that were already protected, but the giants left standing in virgin forests. Since that call to locate and measure the largest trees of each species, American Forests has maintained the National Register of Big Trees, a list of the biggest trees in America. The Big Tree Program is active in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and is used as a model for several Big Tree programs around the world. With sponsorship from The Davey Tree Expert Company since 1989, the National Big Tree Program has been able to reach a wider audience and promote the same message for over 70 years: regardless of size, all trees are champions of the environment.

2011 National Register of Really Big Trees

American Forests' 2011 National Register of Big Trees represents more than 660 species – 30 more than last year – with trees in 45 states and the District of Columbia. The registry lists a total of 751 grand champion trees. Newcomers include the co-champion Osage-orange trees in Virginia and Delaware, the Rocky Mountain Douglas fir in Texas, the Virginia pine in West Virginia, and the eastern white oak in Indiana.

There are still 210 eligible species that have no champions, so if you want to become a big tree hunter with an instant champion to your credit, look for one of these trees. While the nation's most avid big tree hunters are equipped with hypsometers, relascopes, and lasers, amateur tree hunters can get started in their own backyards with sticks and tape measures.

Michigan TREE CHAMPIONS by county:

Berrien:	Weeping WILLOW, Sandbar WILLOW, Gray DOGWOOD
Cass:	Common HACKBERRY, Green ASH
Charlevoix:	White POPLAR
Clinton:	White WILLOW
Kalamazoo:	Pin CHERRY
Kent:	Black MAPLE, Common HOPTREE
Gogebic:	Red PINE
Grand Traverse:	Black WILLOW
Leelanau:	Mountain paper BIRCH, White ASH, Roundleaf DOGWOOD
Newberry:	Silver MAPLE
Manistee:	Black ASH
Washtenaw:	American HAZELNUT, Downy HAWTHORN, American PLUM, Allegheny SERVICEBERRY



Tree Champions you can spot within a good bike ride from home:

- **European Buckthorn**
Ann Arbor, North of Huron River Drive, opposite Nichols Arboretum
- **Common Juniper**
5 miles North of Chelsea
- **Box Elder**
NW of Milan,
Saline & Mooreville Roads

Other notable GIANT TREES (but not Champions) in Washtenaw County

Chinese Lacebark Elm
English Elm
European Buckthorn
Chinkapin Oak
Douglas Fir
Lacebark Pine
Saucer Magnolia
Common Juniper
Michigan Holly
Fringe Tree
Yellow-wood
Cedar of Lebanon
River Birch
Box Elder
Amur Maple
Paperbark Maple



1893

Trees damaged on Huron St., but so many left that the houses are not visible

When many of the trees left town

Other than the Olmsted Brothers, not many of us go around town taking pictures of our trees. Oh, Mom used to say, “Stand over there by the rose bush so I can take your picture,” but other than that, we mostly took pictures of our trees when they were broken down by storms. Until that happened, we just took them for granted.

In 1893, everyone in Ypsilanti probably recognized the folks in the photos on a residential corner looking at the damage to the DeNike house, but today, it is difficult to identify the people, the house, and the exact location of the damage. What seemed such a disaster at the time fades into history.

Gawkers strolled along Congress (Michigan Avenue) Street to examine the roofless buildings and wonder if the businesses housed there would ever reopen, but the trees—we were sure—could always grow back and our neighborhood would fit the same old stage set that we had become accustomed to.

On the occasion of such natural disasters, we tend to stand back and view the carnage and say, “Oh, the trees! It’s just not the same place without the trees...”

Today, everybody seems to be carrying a camera. Now, if they will just label and date the product, there will be an identifiable record for our following generations.

**“Trees down”
is bad news,
but a good
occasion for
recording
their loss**

**The 1893 Cylcone
provided just that
opportunity**

Photos from the Archives of
the Ypsilanti Historical Society



Damage to the DeNike House



Cyclone damage to Ypsilanti's downtown business district

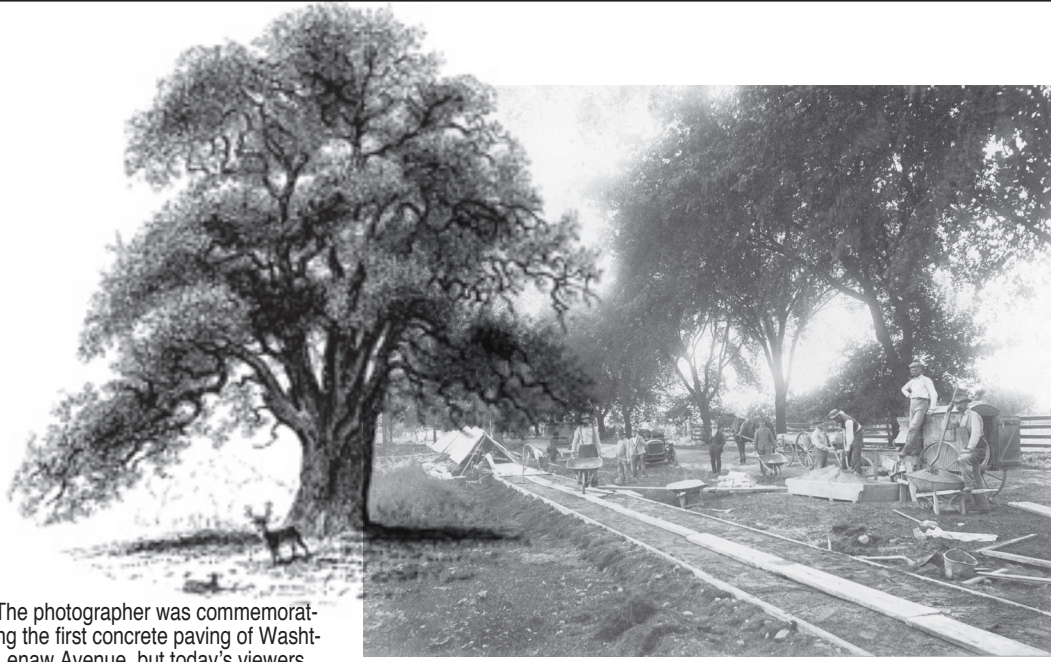


Ypsilanti Tree Survey

-Teresa Gillotti, Planner II/Community & Economic Development

The City of Ypsilanti has applied for and received a grant to complete a tree inventory of street and parks trees in the City and to develop an urban forestry plan. This plan will then be used to inform what trees to plant in a city-owned Tree Nursery to be located on the SE corner of the Water Street Redevelopment Area.

Once developed, the City hopes to create a program whereby neighbors, businesses, and others interested in replanting street and parks trees can do so by request and use material from the tree nursery for the benefit of all. There's much to do in coordinating this effort, but the nursery setup and planting are scheduled for this spring and fall.



The photographer was commemorating the first concrete paving of Washtenaw Avenue, but today's viewers note that it was not necessary then to remove all the trees first

There's plenty of life in our cemeteries

One walking tour through Ypsilanti's historic Highland Cemetery and visitors move easily from reading grave stones to admiring the landscape. That's no accident. The grounds were laid out for just such a reaction.

Colonel James Lewis Glenn (1815-1876) of Niles, MI, designed three cemeteries in the "rural" or "garden" type of cemetery popular in the 1840s: Ann Arbor's Forest Hill in 1859, Silver Brook in 1863 in Niles, and Ypsilanti's Highland in 1864.

"Its own seasonal beauty provides links with the natural ebbs and flows of life," is the apt description from Highland Cemetery's promotional material.

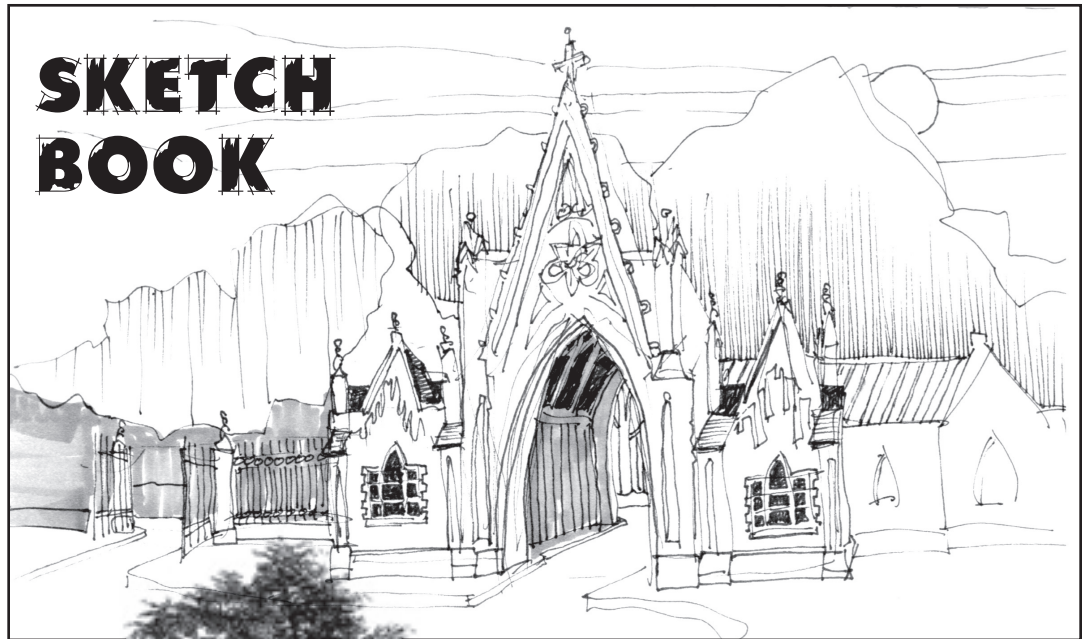
Highland has a rich array of plantings, including those native to this part of Michigan. The Michigan Conservancy has cataloged the flora, making a visit to Highland a treat for horticulturists and plant lovers.

1000 words?

Pictures may be worth more than that. Many will see the photo at left as a primary source document of the original paving of Washtenaw Avenue between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor. They will revel in the crude pup-tents laid over the fresh cement to keep the morning dew or rain off while it dries.

Others will note the clothing on the workmen. A few may even recognize their "Uncle Charlie" from old family photos.

For this issue, we marvel at the elm trees. Remember Dutch Elms?



Entry gate to Detroit's Elmwood Cemetery, one of Frederick Law Olmsted's many projects and site of the Battle of Red Run. Grand tree specimens surround the stately resting places of man of the state's governors.

In addition to Detroit's Elmwood Cemetery, other places in Michigan to see the landscaping works of Frederick Law Olmsted include Belle Isle Park, Bay City's Carroll Park, and Marquette's Presque Isle Park.

And there's always the grounds of the U.S. Capitol, New York City's Central Park, and the gardens at Biltmore Estate.

Woodman, read the rules! Ypsilanti has ordinances for that:

The City of Ypsilanti does not take trees for granted. We have a whole section of ordinances having to do with trees and shrubs in the city. Although we have not yet had rules protecting historic trees as we do for historic buildings, we have vital rules for protecting trees and shrubs generally:

Sec. 110-49. - Protection of trees and shrubs generally.

No person shall break, injure, mutilate, kill or destroy any tree or shrub on public property, or set any fire or permit any fire or the heat therefrom to injure any portion of any tree.

No toxic chemicals or other injurious materials shall be allowed to seep, drain or be emptied on, near or about any tree; provided, that this shall not prohibit the use of city approved chemical control of tree and brush growth.

No electric wires or installation or any other lines or wires shall be attached to any tree in any manner that shall cause damage thereto.

All persons having under their care, custody or control facilities which may interfere with the trimming or removal of any tree covered by this article shall, after notice thereof by the public works director, promptly abate such interference in such a manner as may permit the trimming or removal of any tree by the public works director.

There's even an ordinance on trees we don't especially like:

Sec. 110-52. - Undesirable species of trees.

The city manager is hereby authorized to direct the public works director to remove any undesirable species of poplar, willow, box elder, soft maple, tree of heaven, ash, wild chestnut and cottonwood trees growing on any right-of-way, park or public place in the city.

Headings from the City Ordinance re trees:

- Definitions
- Applicability
- Power and control of city manager
- Blight violation
- Permit to prune, spray, etc.
- Planting; permission required
- Planting prohibited where roots may injure sewers, walks, etc.
- Planting near street intersections
- Orders to plant or remove
- Assessment of costs of planting and removal.
- Spacing of trees planted in rights-of-way
- Planting near sidewalks
- Use of trees as anchors.
- Excavations and drive-ways near trees
- Trimming of trees obstructing streets
- Trimming by city
- Interference with growth of trees
- Damage from leaking gas
- Removal of dead and diseased trees
- Removal of living trees
- Trees and shrubs interfering with fire hydrants, sewers, etc.
- Chemical control and trimming by public utilities



Woodman, Spare That Tree!

By George Pope Morris

WOODMAN, spare that tree!

Touch not a single bough!
In youth it sheltered me,
And I'll protect it now.
'Twas my forefather's hand
That placed it near his cot;
There, woodman, let it stand,
Thy axe shall harm it not.

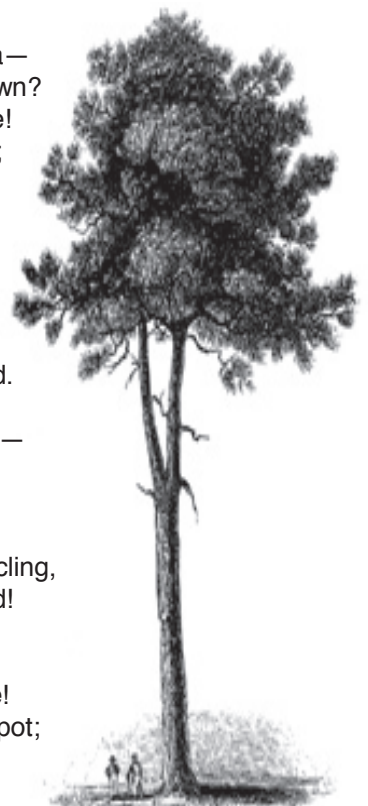
That old familiar tree,
Whose glory and renown
Are spread o'er land and sea—
And wouldst thou hew it down?
Woodman, forbear thy stroke!
Cut not its earth-bound ties;
Oh, spare that aged oak
Now towering to the skies!

When but an idle boy,
I sought its grateful shade;
In all their gushing joy
Here, too, my sisters played.
My mother kissed me here;
My father pressed my hand—
Forgive this foolish tear,
But let that old oak stand.

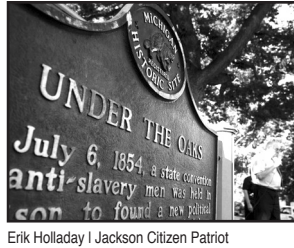
My heart-strings round thee cling,
Close as thy bark, old friend!
Here shall the wild-bird sing,
And still thy branches bend.
Old tree! the storm still brave!
And, woodman, leave the spot;
While I've a hand to save,
Thy axe shall harm it not.

Trees not seen since Olmsted's 1913 study:

American Elm
American Chestnut
Red Oak
Eastern Hemlock
Black Cottonwood
Murray Birch
Douglas Hawthorn
Black Crownberry



Bruce Barton, at right, announces the start of the program commemorating the 155th anniversary of the formation of the Republican Party at Under the Oaks park in Jackson, MI. The party was formed in this oak grove on July 6, 1854



Erik Holladay | Jackson Citizen Patriot

Trees in our history

Black Hawk Tree, a cottonwood in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. Debunked local lore held that Sauk Chief Black Hawk once hid amongst its branches to escape his pursuers. The tree was destroyed by a storm during the 1920s.

The Burmis tree, a limber pine near Crowsnest Pass, Alberta. Declared dead in 1979 but still standing on the north side of the Crowsnest Highway.

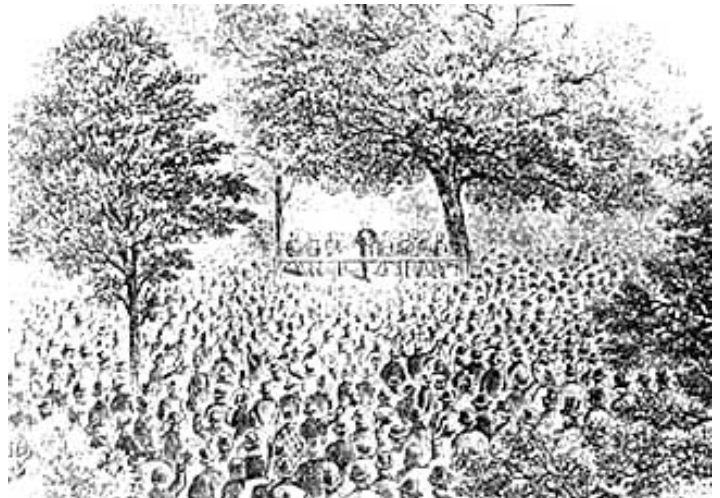
The Buttonwood tree which once stood at the foot of Wall Street in New York City. It was under this tree that stock traders once gathered and formed the Buttonwood Agreement which later evolved into the New York Stock Exchange.

The Charter Oak, in which the Connecticut charter was hidden from English governor-general Sir Edmund Andros.

The Genesee Big Tree at Genesee, New York, a giant tree on the Genesee River, reported by some as an elm, by others as an oak. It was the site of the 1797 Treaty of Big Tree between Robert Morris and the Seneca tribe to sell most of western New York, also known as The Holland Purchase. It was washed away in a flood in the mid 19th century.

The Mercer Oak, the white oak on which a wounded General Hugh Mercer rested during the American Revolutionary War's Battle of Princeton. Despite its fall in early 2000, it continues to be Princeton Township, New Jersey's emblem.

The Mingo Oak, formerly the oldest and largest white oak in the United States until its fall on September 10, 1938. It was located in Mingo County, West Virginia.



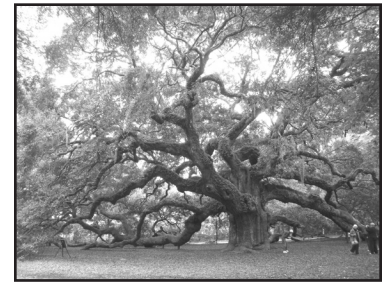
"Under the Oaks" The First Republican Convention, Jackson, Michigan 1854

The Prometheus, a Great Basin Bristlecone Pine, was the oldest living non-colonial organism. The age was estimated at 5,000 years. The tree was cut down on August 6, 1964, by a graduate student and U.S. Forest Service personnel for research purposes, though at the time they did not know of its world-record age.

The Treaty of Greenville Tree in Greenville, Ohio.

The Mother of the Forest (688 BC - AD 1852), a 321-foot giant sequoia in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, central California.

Angel Oak, thought to be one of the oldest living organisms east of the Mississippi River, stands on Abraham Waight's 1717 land grant, derives its name from the Angel estate. Local folklore tells of ghosts of former slaves appearing as angels around the tree.



Wawona Tree, a giant sequoia with a tunnel cut through it. Fell in 1969.

The Wye Oak, honorary state tree of Maryland, largest white oak tree in the U.S.

Become a Member

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation encourages both private and public preservation efforts.

Join today and learn about what we have to offer!

Visit the website at www.yhf.org to enter your name and address.

Mail it along with a check for the appropriate amount to our treasurer.

Our membership year runs from January-December.

Make checks payable to: Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

c/o Claudia Pettit

945 Sheridan

Ypsilanti, MI 48197



Annual Membership Categories

Students & Seniors	\$5
Individual	\$10
Family	\$15
Contributing	\$25
Supporting	\$50
Sustaining	\$100
Lifetime	\$1000

Over 100 historical markers have been placed in the city by the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

Criteria for selection of Historical Markers



The time is coming again for The Heritage Foundation's Marker Award Banquet. It will take place Wednesday, 23 May 2012 at the Ladies' Literary Club. At the banquet, owners of houses that meet certain criteria are recognized for their efforts and Historic Building Markers are awarded in order to publicly identify buildings of special merit. You can nominate a home or building for this special award. How about bringing places that you think deserve an award to the attention of the selection committee?

Here are the criteria used by the committee:

- The building is within the boundaries of the City of Ypsilanti.
- The building predates 1950 and has an identifiable architectural style.
- The building is well and appropriately maintained (maybe it has just been rehabilitated).
- The grounds are maintained.
- If it is a rental property, the property has had appropriate maintenance for at least two years.
- The building has been developed sensitively.

The following example gives an idea of what is meant by "appropriate maintenance."

- The siding on the building is what was originally intended or could have been used originally. Vinyl siding on a 19th century building is never appropriate.
- The windows are original or identical to the original in size and configuration.
- Porches, railings and steps are appropriate to the period and style of the building.
- Any additions are compatible.

One-of-a-kind markers are possible in order to recognize the preservation and stabilization of a significant or high-profile building that has had a history of mistreatment. These will be selected after a case-by-case review.

If you would like to nominate a building for a Historic Marker designation send a very brief description of the building and its address to: Don Randazzo

Chair, YHF Marker Committee
6101 Hitchingham Road, Ypsilanti, MI 48197
e-mail: drandazzo@provide.net

Heritage News Briefs

May's marker awards will go to historic structures in industry

The Foundation has recognized houses and barns; the May 2012 awards of markers' will emphasize commercial and industrial examples throughout the City.

Newberry appointed to Foundation Board

With his EMU Historic Preservation degree in hand, Michael Newberry has joined the YHF Board. He is owner of a historic home in Ypsilanti, former intern at Ypsilanti Historical Museum, and is employed at Materials Unlimited.

Festival works to restore "heritage" theme

James Mann is heading a committee of folks determined to put more emphasis on local history and heritage in this August's annual Ypsilanti Heritage Festival.

Ypsi history writer featured

Out-takes from MICHIGAN HISTORY magazine, March/April 2012, Conversations: With editor Patricia J. Mahjer and Ypsilanti's Laura Bien

Mahjer: "Laura Bien didn't intend to assume the mantle of "local historian." After earning a literature degree, she first taught English as a Second Language both abroad and in the U.S. She followed that with an editing position at an Ann Arbor magazine. But, with the dawn of blogging in the early 2000s, she found a forum that allowed her the freedom to research and write about a myriad of interests, including the history of her adopted community of Ypsilanti."

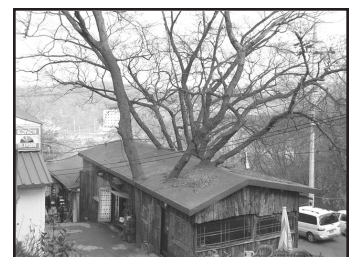
"She continues to blog while also contributing to online newspapers. Her work has appeared in MICHIGAN HISTORY. And, late last year, the History Press published her second book on Ypsilanti history."

Bien: "A historian ... has sufficient imagination and depth of historical knowledge to be able to suggest connections when none remain in archival materials. I work as a history writer and, as such, am just an aspiring autodidact."

And, in describing her work from Ypsilanti's Fletcher-White Archives, Bien notes, "The archives contain photos, genealogies, old newspapers, diaries, maps, blueprints, postcards, letters, tax records, crime dockets, yearbooks, obituaries, and artifacts. It also has file collections for Ypsilanti families, cemeteries, businesses, organizations, and churches, and a subject file with assorted community subjects."

Modern house not inhibited by historic tree

All this attention to detail without the protection of a Historic District Ordinance





The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

Heritage News

Claudia Pettit
945 Sheridan
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

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*Dedicated to the belief that one of Ypsilanti's
greatest resources is its wonderful historic architecture*

See you at the General Meeting - Wednesday, 21 March 2012, at 7:30 p.m.

Heritage News is the newsletter of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation. It is published five times a year: September, November, January, March, and May; and distributed, free of charge to the membership by mail, and made available to the public at City Hall, Farmers' Market, and various business locations in the three business districts in the City.



"What artists so noble...as he who, with far-reaching conception of beauty, in designing power, sketches the outlines, writes the colors, and directs the shadows of a picture so great that Nature shall be employed upon it for generations, before the work he arranged for her shall realize his intentions." -Frederick Law Olmsted



2012 SCHEDULE

Meetings are held at the Ladies' Literary Club,
218 N. Washington Street, Ypsilanti, at 7:30 p.m.
The public is welcome.

21
MARCH

Teresa Gillotti, Ypsilanti City Planner
**"Urban Forestry plan
and Ypsilanti tree nursery –
a community-wide effort"**

23
MAY

Annual Marker Awards Banquet

19
AUGUST

**35th Annual
Heritage Festival Home Tour**

SEPTEMBER

TBA

NOVEMBER

TBA